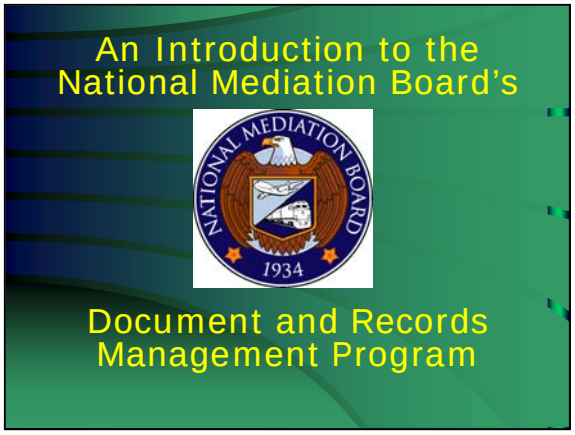


The old NMB document management "system" probably looked a lot like most document management systems that have grown up over the years, integrating computers, fax machines, e-mail, and other new elements along the way.

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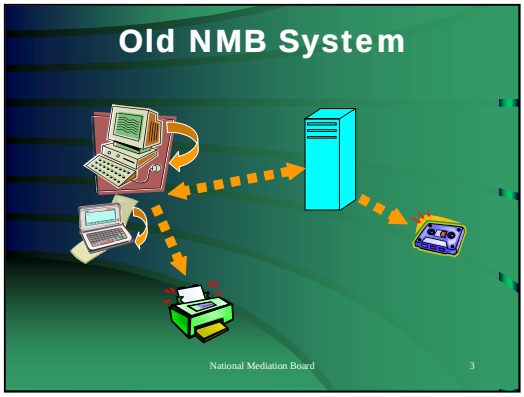
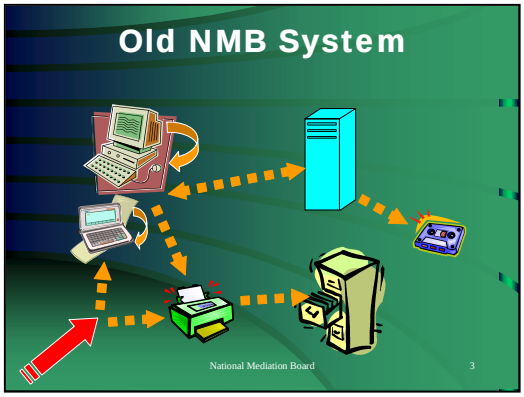



At the NMB all employees have desk top computers, and all of the mediators, who work in the field an average of three weeks per month, have notebook computers.

The first line of document handling is what gets created and saved on hard drives or other storage devices.

These documents could be printed locally, or they could be stored electronically on the NMB's local area network (LAN) server.

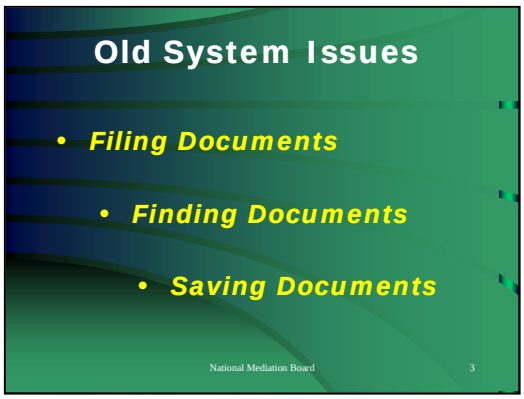



The printed documents could be stored as hard copies in a file folder, or they could be stored as hard copies *and* as electronic copies.

To protect the documents, the NMB used a tape backup system, which made sure that we had a copy of the electronic documents, but the paper files were not indexed and not backed up.

Finally, documents came from sources outside the NMB, and could either go into the electronic loop (e-mails and e-files), or they could be shunted into the paper "system".

There are a number of problems with systems like the one the NMB used to have, and they can be grouped under three primary document handling issues:



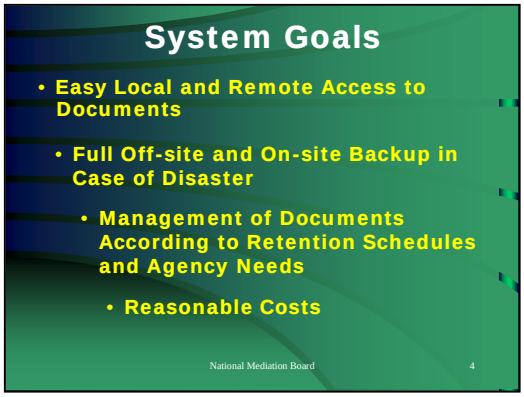

Filing Documents – Basically, anyone in the agency could create a file (electronic or paper) and put it where they wanted to put it (on the LAN or in a file cabinet), making it virtually impossible to know what the agency really was producing. It also meant that there was a lot of duplication in files (documents existing in electronic and paper forms) and there were countless drafts running around, with no protocol to ensure they were named or stored in a way that would allow for reconstructing the sequence of drafts, and sometimes making it hard to figure out which was the "final" document that became a record of the agency. It also meant that there was a ton of paper that got filed and never cleared out – when we went to the new system we got rid of so much paper in the Chicago office that moving it became an OSHA issue for the staff there.

Finding Documents – It was *easy* to find documents under the old system. ***IF*** you knew who created and filed it, and ***IF*** you remembered what you called it, and ***IF*** it was filed correctly or the way you remembered it being filed, and ***IF*** you remembered where you put it.

Saving Documents – Under the old system nothing got thrown away, even though we operated under retention schedules that theoretically indicated the life of the document. In the transition period, we are still finding paper from the 1930's that is useless but which has been taking up space in file rooms and that we have been paying to store.

When we set about to revamp the document management system, we set four primary goals:

We had to have easy access to documents, both remotely and in the office. By easy access we intended to provide not just the ability to get to the documents, but the ability to find specific documents easily.

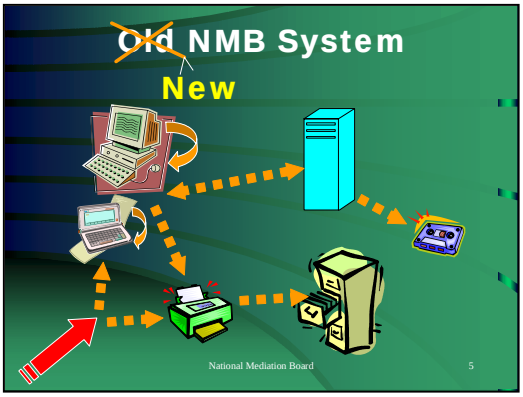



We had to deal with the issue of backup that was secure and accessible, and with the potential need to do business from somewhere other than our offices in DC.

We had to get a handle on the retention of records and documents, and to comply with all of NARA's dictates.

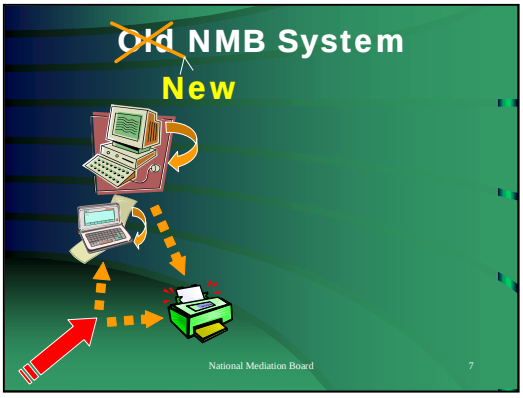
We had to do this without spending a lot of money – in fact, we set a goal of saving the agency money by streamlining and automating the process.

With this graphic we are back to the old system – now let's see how the new system is different.



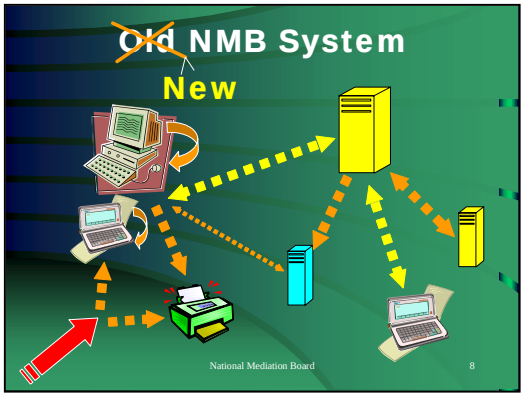

First, we did away with the notion of saving and accessing everything from our LAN server – we wiped it and the tape backup out.

Second, as much as is possible, we have wiped out our paper files - they'll never go away completely, but we're trying.



Having wiped out the guts of the old system, we reconstructed a new system with a radically different philosophy.

First we replaced our LAN server as the primary repository of our documents – that function is now handled by a web server (currently housed in Texas). It is accessed by our NMB computers, both desk tops and notebooks, through a web interface that offers a search engine very much like you would find with Google or other commercial search engines.

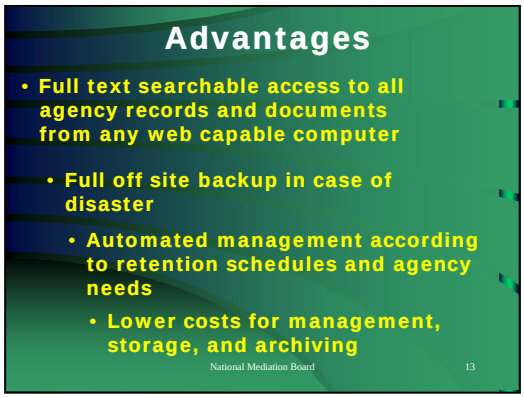



Second, we set up a full back up in Texas so the data is protected once remotely.

Third, we set up a back up loop to a smaller LAN server at the NMB, so we have full back up on-site in case something happens to the web link.

Finally, we set up remote accounts for our staff so they can access the system from any computer, anywhere in the world, as long as it has a web browser.

The advantages are immediate and remarkable.




First, NMB employees on the system have full access to agency records and documents, with the ability to conduct full text searches (down to the single word level) on the entire data base of documents from any web-capable computer, anywhere in the world.

Second, we have redundant full backup off site in case of disaster.

Third, retention of records is managed automatically to make sure we comply with all NARA guidelines and to make sure we are not paying for storage of material that should have been destroyed. Multiple levels of protection are in place to ensure that the documents we get rid of are the ones we want to get rid of, not records that we should hold longer.

Finally, the agency has realized a significant saving in costs when compared with the old system, or with a system resident on the agency's LAN.